

The project RAIL4SEE

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Sofia Municipality and BDZ Passengers are involved in a project to improve transport interconnectivity (RAIL4SEE). It turns major cities in Southeast Europe into transnational transport hubs and aims to enhance passenger transport intermodality. The total cost of the initiative is 4.5 million. Euro. Cities involved in the project are Bologna, Bratislava, Bucharest, Budapest, Ljubljana, Sofia, Thessaloniki, Trieste, Venice, Vienna and Zagreb.

The international project's duration is 30 months and includes 11 transport hubs from 9 countries. The aim is to integrate the rail centres into united transport systems, such as common charging systems, thus strengthening the role of intermodality in passenger transport. The benefit to travellers is the good connectivity between transport hubs. For example, a passenger traveling from Bologna (Italy) to Pernik (Bulgaria), would be able to buy tickets and get all the necessary information at one place. So the passenger would have paid for the entire trip by card and then he would be easily transferred from Sofia airport to Pernik by train. The general objective of the cooperation is to strengthen the role of rail transport by better integration of the 11 major rail centres and regions in Southeast Europe. The activities are organised on three levels - common concepts for a better relationship are created between urban, regional and international rail and combined transport. Target groups are local administrative structures, railway operators, regional associations for integrated public transport, as well as potential investors.



Lyudmil Ivanov:

"At the moment pilot RAIL4SEE activities are performed, intermodal system connectivity will be built in the coming years. "

"This is just the beginning of the project and after completion of the first stage in the new

programme period 2014-2020 concrete measures would be looked for. Currently pilot activities are implemented aimed at finding out how the local client in each of the countries involved would react to the idea of modality in terms of his journey. The benefit for him would be a better connectivity between participants in the transport process. Probably in the next programme period, after all the necessary studies and calculations are made the implementation will proceed with the construction of the system "- specified Lyudmil Ivanov, Sofia Municipality external expert and coordinator for the project RAIL4SEE.

The scope of the area around the cities is determined by the countries themselves. For Sofia it is accepted a scale of 250 km, not as a radius, but including "power" centers such as Stara Zagora, Vratsa, Kyustendil and Blagoevgrad. Currently activities include assessment of how far the project will have to extend and also information gathering about travelling times for different transport modes in terms of the distances between cities. When all the necessary information about travelling time, distance and price is gathered, it will be analysed and the project participants will get acquainted with the result. Partners meet regularly every few months in different countries. Their last meeting was in February in Budapest (Hungary). There, the 27 participants discussed the pilot activities and ways to overcome the problems that arise. The next meeting will be held in June in Thessaloniki.

The main intercity lines and TEN-T network

The cities in South East Europe are the starting and ending points of the transnational transport links. There is a need for integration between the junctions in the region, especially for those who are part of the trans-European transport network and the main intercity lines. This integration can be achieved only by improving the organization of the lines. That requires multimodal integration of the transport systems. Therefore, within the RAIL4SEE project partners discuss mutual activities related to overcoming barriers to the integration of rail assemblies in local, regional, transnational and TEN-T systems. The challenge is to develop models, concepts, measures, harmonized strategies and policy activities aimed at improving rail and intermodal transport in the whole region.